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AUTHOR	Applegate, H. C.
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ABSTRACT

To gain some insight into the effectiveness of the Glendale Public Library Processing Section, it was decided to compare, with some very crude measures, the performance in the acquisition and cataloging areas of that library with that of the neighboring libraries of Pasadena and Burbank. A management consultant on the Glendale City Manager's staff visited Pasadena and Burbank and collected some elementary data from these libraries. Their staffing and basic organizational structure was determined. A detailed list of the functions performed at the Glendale Library was reviewed with each of the libraries, and differences in functional coverage were explored and noted. Statistics were also collected on the standardpublished measures of titles added, titles deleted, volumes added and withdrawn, and nonbook materials withdrawn. The analysis used consisted of an adjustment for functional differences, and then the standard statistics were divided by the total number of staff, to determine number of transactions per employee. Examination of the index data indicated that the effectiveness of all three libraries was very close to the same level. (Author)

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A ROUGH APPROXIMATION

of the

RELATIVE LABOR EFFECTIVENESS

of the

BOOK ACQUISITION AND CATALOGING PROCESS

AT THREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

prepared
for the
Chief Librarian
Library Division
City of Glendale

by
H. C. Applegate
City Manager's Staff

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May 29, 1974

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A complex administrative operation such as book acquisition and cataloging is difficult to evaluate in terms of efficiency or productivity. The workload varies throughout the year and rush periods occur. There are no absolute standards and the operations and techniques involved in the process vary from library to library.

In order to gain some insight into the effectiveness of the Glendale Public Library Processing Section, it was decided to compare, with some very crude measures, the performance in the acquisition and cataloging areas of the Glendale library with that of the neighboring libraries of Pasadena and Burbank. It was felt that such a comparison might be useful to the managements of all three libraries.

Therefore, a management consultant on the Glendale City Manager's staff visited Pasadena and Burbank and collected some elementary data from these libraries. The staffing and the basic organizational structure of the libraries was determined. A detailed list of the functions performed at the Glendale library was reviewed with each of the libraries, and differences in functional coverage were explored and noted. Statistics were also collected on the standard published measures of Titles Added, Titles Deleted, Volumes Added, Volumes Withdrawn, and Non-book Material Withdrawn.

Since the basic objective was a very crude measure of comparison, it was decided that a very simple analysis would be the best. Additional refinement in the analysis would have required a rather extensive collection of time-spent-per-function data, and this was not felt to be worth the additional accuracy possible in the results. The analysis used consisted of an adjustment for functional differences, and then the standard library statistics were divided by the total number of equivalent full-time persons

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on the staff. This gives the number of transactions per employee and serves as the rough index of comparison. These divisions by the numbers of employees normalize the data and allow comparisons of different volume operations.

Table 1 presents the acquisition and cataloging organization and staff for each of the three libraries. They are, as might be expected, very similar. All have book ordering sections and cataloging sections with support groups. Glendale uses almost two full-time Pages and Pasadena uses only one-fifth of a person as part-time help.

Table 2 presents a summary of the list of major functions performed at Glendale and notes the differences occurring in Pasadena and Burbank. The functional accomplishments at all three libraries are similar. Most of the differences are minor. The only major difference discovered was Pasadena's internal production of all catalog cards. For the purposes of this analysis it was estimated that this card production process involves two people. Therefore, the number of equivalent staff personnel used as a divisor in the comparison calculations was reduced by two for Pasadena.

Table 3 presents the operating statistics of 1972-73 for the three libraries, and lists the corresponding transactions per employee as calculated. An average of all of the transactions per employee was also calculated and is listed. It should be emphasized that all of these index numbers are artificial numbers and have no meaning in themselves. This normalizing process merely provides an arbitrary index figure which may be compared to another similar number for a corresponding item. In rough terms a larger index number in one column relative to a corresponding index number in another column indicates a possible greater effectiveness by the organization with the larger number. It is recognized that all staff members do not contribute equally to the group output or work on all functions. It should also

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be noted that this type of analysis is a very gross analysis and therefore only large differences have any real significance. The functions performed by the three libraries while quite similar are not exactly the same, and there is also an effect of operating volume that cannot be removed completely by the normalizing dividing process. These factors make the actual index comparisons valid only to perhaps plus or minus twenty percent.

With these considerations in mind, examination of the index data indicates that the effectiveness of all three libraries is very close to the same level. Glendale and Burbank are almost identical with the accuracy of the experiment, while Pasadena appears to be slightly less.

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Table 1. - Acquisition and Cataloging Organization and Staffing

GLENDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Processing Section
Catalog Librarian

Catalog Unit
Librarian II
Librarian I (½ time)
Clerk III
Clerk Typist I

Book Order Unit
Clerk III
Clerk Typist II

Book Repair Unit
Clerk II
Clerk I

Typing Unit
Clerk Typist II
Clerk Typist I

Library Pages (73 hrs/wk)

PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Technical Services Division
Coordinating Librarian

Acquisition Section
Library Technician II
Intermediate Typist Clerk

Cataloging Section
Program Librarian
Librarian (½ time)
Library Technician I
Intermediate Typist Clerk
Intermediate Clerk

Processing Section
Library Technician II
Intermediate Typist Clerk
Intermediate Typist Clerk
Clerk
Clerk

Mending, Binding, and
Periodicals Section
Librarian
Intermediate Clerk
Intermediate Clerk
Intermediate Clerk

Pages & Part Time (8 hrs/wk)

BURBANK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Bibliographical Services Department
Director

Order Section
Library Coordinator
Intermediate Clerk

Serials Section
Library Assistant

Catalog Section
Librarian
Intermediate Clerk
Library Clerk

Part time personnel (40 hrs/wk)

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Table 2. - Functional Comparison

Function List Glendale	Notes on Differences at Pasadena	Burbank
1. Book Order Meeting List preparation & reproduction including abstracts.	No abstracts.	No abstracts.
2. Research, preparation, liaison, and filing of book order forms.		Form is input to EDP.
3. Preparation and filing of Library of Congress order forms.	Not done.	Preparation is 50% by computer and 50% by hand.
4. Opening and checking newly received material against order.		Opening done by Custodian.
5. Processing receiver data to finance group including liaison.		Invoice only - P. O. not handled.
6. Determination of account charging allocations.		Not done.
7. Research, typing and filing catalog cards, authority and shelf cards.	Cards made by staff not purchased. L.C. cards not used.	L.C. cards for adult non-fiction only rest made by staff. Pub file by Ref staff
8. Prep of book pockets & book checks. Gluing pocket, covering & marking books.	Labels used.	Book pockets not typed.
9. Repairing old items already in collection.		
10. Preparation of management, statistical and etc reports.		

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Table 3. - Performance Comparison

Item	Glendale	Pasadena	Burbank
Titles added	8,799	7,119	4,600
Per employee	721	484	575
Volumes added	33,898	28,355	11,804
Per employee	2,779	1,929	1,476
Volumes withdrawn	14,927	28,014	13,613
Per employee	1,224	1,906	1,702
Non-book material added	19,142	11,111	4,130
Per employee	1,569	756	516
Non-book material withdrawn	11,997	4,612	1,707
Per employee	983	314	213
Average transactions per employee (± 20% range)	596 (476 to 715)	367 (294 to 440)	560 (448 to 672)

Staff Summary:

Professionals	2.5	3.5	3.0
Clerical	8.0	13.0	4.0
Pages (equiv. full time)	1.7	0.2	1.0
Total equiv. personnel	12.2	16.7	8.0
		- 2.0 adjustment	
		14.7	

Note: The operating statistics listed are for the fiscal year 1972-1973.